

# **PROGRAM ABSTRACT**

**NAME OF PROGRAM:** Prevention Resource Officer Program

**FUNDING AVAILABLE:** To Be Announced

**ELIGIBILITY:** Units of Local Government

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Recent incidents of school shootings such as Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut in December 2012 have again focused local, state, and national attention on school violence. This tragic event, and others like it, have received massive amounts of national media attention and raised a number of questions about the safety of students and faculty in the public school system.

Recent years have shown an increase in incidents in West Virginia schools involving weapons, with the number of actual reported injuries rising. Drugs, both prescription and illegal, have also continued to mar the mountain state's schools on an alarmingly regular basis. With these problems, as well as many others, our schools can no longer serve as the traditional sanctuary of safety without significant programs that increase the level of safety in our schools and prevent juvenile crime. The PRO program is one of those programs.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM:**

The PRO Program is a cooperative effort between schools and law enforcement to: improve student's attitudes and knowledge of criminal justice and law enforcement, to prevent kids from committing crimes, to mentor youth with law enforcement officers to provide a safer school environment and to combine safety and child advocacy assuring a better school experience for all WV youth.

The program has three main components:

- Prevention – The officers facilitate classes on non-traditional educational topics;
- Mentoring – Officers are trained on how to be a positive mentor to students they interact with daily; and
- Safety – Officers are trained to recognize potential danger, prevent violence, and to respond to dangerous school situations.

The PRO program places certified WV Police Officers who are also certified Prevention Resource Officers in local middle and high schools. The officers maintain an office in the school, are in that one school 35-40 hours per week, attend extra-curricular activities, facilitate classes on non-traditional educational topics such as juvenile law, domestic violence, underage drinking, drug and alcohol prevention, and child abuse and neglect. They work on safety issues, prevention, and learning more about youth and interacting with them.

### **Goal**

To provide funding that will implement the PRO (Prevention Resource Officer) program. These officers will adhere to community policing principles, provide education to all areas of juvenile law, act as a deterrent to crime and be a positive role model and mentor for the youth in that community and school.

### **Program Objectives and Performance Measures:**

#### **Objectives**

1. To educate students on juvenile crime and juvenile issues by providing instruction on non-traditional educational topics.
2. To provide advice to students who are at risk of becoming involved in juvenile crime.
3. To inform students of problems which lead to truancy, poor grades, drugs, and crime.
4. To increase awareness of at-risk youth concerning problems and consequences.
5. To act as a deterrent to juvenile crime in the school and in the community.
6. To act as a positive role model and mentor in the school and in the community. Therefore, minimizing negative stereotypes and allowing the officer to be known as an individual, rather than by their role.

### **GUIDELINE REQUIREMENTS FOR PREVENTION RESOURCE OFFICERS:**

1. PRO must adhere to all established PRO guidelines.
2. PRO must be a current, state certified police officer with at least one year of field/road experience and employed by a law enforcement agency, the county or the city.
3. PRO must be a child advocate, must enjoy working with youth and be willing to do so.
4. PRO must complete required DJCS training and be certified as a PRO before entering the school. This training is provided on an annual basis.
5. DJCS requires grant funded sub grantees to assign one, full-time PRO officer per school. PRO must maintain an office in the assigned school and be present in that school at least 35 hours per week.

6. PRO will be stationed in a West Virginia Public school. Grant funds may only be utilized to fund officers placed in middle or high schools. It is encouraged, but not required, for the officer to occasionally visit the elementary school and establish communication with the teachers, administrators and students. These visits are in addition to the required 35 hours.
7. PRO function is not disciplinary. PRO is assigned to the school to provide prevention, mentoring, and safety. However, PRO should be involved in any incidents requiring legal action.
8. PRO must be available to facilitate at least one non-traditional educational class per week. PRO must submit classroom topics to the county school board, and/or school principal for approval.
9. PRO must maintain facilitation resources, materials, lesson plans, and attendance for all classes facilitated.
10. Prior to the officer entering the school, grantee must submit to DJCS an Agreement between Law Enforcement and the County Board of Education.
11. PRO must be aware of and adhere to all school policies and school laws. PRO must follow the Law Enforcement Code of Conduct as well as the Teacher's Code of Conduct at all times.
12. PRO must maintain a resource list containing the names and numbers of services available to youth, the school, and community.
13. During school hours, PRO will directly report to the principal of the school the PRO is stationed in as well as their law enforcement supervisor.
14. PRO will be assigned to a Regional Liaison Officer. PRO must be in contact with Liaison monthly.
15. PRO must attend and present the PRO program at the first Faculty/Senate Meeting prior to the first day of school and must attend Faculty/Senate Meetings on a regular basis.
16. PRO must be familiar with and adhere to confidentiality requirements.
17. The PRO will adhere to all state, federal, board of education or other requirements concerning the confidentiality of a student. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, HIPPA, confidentiality of the names of juveniles involved as victims, juveniles involved as suspects or persons of interest in the investigation or prosecution of juvenile or criminal statutes. The PRO will ensure that any confidential information is in a secure location and not accessible by others.

18. PRO must maintain and update annually a copy of the illustrated physical layout to the school they are stationed in. These current blueprints must be in a secure area in the office of the PRO as well as on file with the head of the law enforcement department which employs the PRO, as well as with WV State Police, Sheriff's Department, and all local law enforcement.
19. PRO must have a copy, be familiar with, and participate in the execution of the school crisis plan. This plan must be updated annually and kept in a secure area in the office of the PRO as well as on file with the head of the law enforcement department which employs the PRO, as well as with WV State Police, Sheriff's Department, and all local law enforcement.
20. PRO must maintain a written evacuation plan. This plan must be updated annually and kept in a secure area in the office of the PRO as well as on file with the head of the law enforcement department which employs the PRO, as well as with WV State Police, Sheriff's Department, and all local law enforcement.
21. PRO must maintain individual and group files representing every incident reported. PRO must ensure that any student files that they maintain are kept in a secure manner to protect the confidentiality of those students.
22. PRO must develop a Planning and Evaluation Team with key community members for the purpose of resource sharing and networking. The P&E team must meet at least every other month. Minutes from the meetings are to be submitted to DJCS.

**REQUIRED PROCEDURES FOR GRANT FUNDED PRO'S:**

- A. The PRO shall not function as school disciplinarian, or safety officer, except in cases of emergency. This includes the officer being directly involved in the incident or a crime has been committed. It is not the responsibility of the PRO to intervene with the normal disciplinary actions of the school or be used as a witness to disciplinary procedures in the school. The PRO will, at all times, be expected to act within the scope of authority granted by the law.
- B. The PRO shall remain an employee of the city or county law enforcement agency and will be directly accountable to their law enforcement supervisor as well as the principal of the school.
- C. The PRO will work in conjunction with the school principal and other school staff in formulating programs, activities, safety, criminal apprehension and interdiction (prohibition forbidden), as well as serve as liaison between the school

and the department. Investigation and further prosecution will be referred to the police department.

D. PRO shall report directly for duty to the school building during assigned work times.

1. The PRO will work a flexible eight-hour schedule and will not be required to attend extracurricular activities, but shall have the option to attend as needed.

2. If overtime is necessary for activities to fulfill the PRO's overall goals and objectives, it must receive prior approval from the direct supervisor.

E. PRO shall maintain an office/workspace in the school.

F. The PRO will attempt to accommodate the requests from the school staff that are appropriate for the position and do not conflict with the police department policy or procedures.

1. The PRO will provide instruction to students in various aspects of law enforcement and legal education as requested and supervised by the teacher.

2. The PRO will abide by County School Board policies and school laws that relate to a Prevention Resource Officer unless they conflict with existing departmental policy.

3. The PRO will consult with the school principal and staff to determine job functions for the position. These functions cannot conflict with police department policy and procedures or school laws and policies.

4. The PRO will be required to attend Faculty/Senate Meetings regularly and is also encouraged to attend PTO meetings.

5. The PRO shall consult and coordinate all instructional activities and programs through the principal.

G. The Law Enforcement Agency shall select an officer to serve in the capacity of PRO, as per their hiring procedures.

H. PRO will not perform duties that fall within the realm of existing school personnel, such as the principal, counselors or truancy officers. **The PRO will acknowledge the principal as the administrative leader**

**of the school and the PRO is subject to directives and supervision of the principal at all times, while on school grounds.**

- I. PRO will attempt to identify and prevent delinquent behavior through informal counseling and referral to existing school or community resources.
- J. The PRO will foster a better relationship between students, teachers, and police officers. Public relations will be a critical part of the PRO's job; however, the role must be carefully balanced against the traditional law enforcement function.
  - 1. The PRO will provide information about crime prevention.
  - 2. The PRO will be aware of and adhere to existing referral services and will be able to address problems by utilizing available resources.
  - 3. The PRO will be aware of substance abuse programs and will work with the school to reduce problems with drugs, alcohol, and violence prevention. The PRO will also work in coordination with the Safe and Drug Free School Coordinator.
  - 4. The PRO will provide assistance and support to crime victims at the school.
  - 5. The PRO will serve in the role of facilitator in regard to concepts and structure of the law.

***\*\*\*DJCS strongly recommends, but does not require the PRO to wear a uniform and a gun while on duty on the school campus. National Training Programs encourage the weapon for the safety of the officers as well as students.***

## **ACTIVITIES**

- 1. Conduct surveys of students, faculty, staff, and parents on an annual basis.
- 2. Conduct a MINIMUM of one non-traditional class per week (i.e. criminal justice, constitutional law, ATV safety, Fatal Vision, etc.).
- 3. Attend as many extra-curricular activities as possible.
- 4. Be on location, at assigned school, AT LEAST 35-40 hours per week.

5. Be present in hallways between classes, during lunch periods, as well as in the halls and parking lots before and after school.
6. Be available for mentoring to students either requesting PRO or referred by school faculty and/or staff.

## **PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

1. Reduction of juvenile crime in the school.
2. Reduction in first time juvenile offenders, and re-offenders.
3. Increase in student acceptance and value of the program (determined by student surveys).
4. Decrease in DUI arrest of juveniles in the community.
5. Subject-matter of classes conducted.
6. Number of children in programs.
7. Number of classes provided on substance abuse.
8. Number of illegal drug prevention programs supported.
9. Number of community-based social intervention and/or gang diversion programs supported with JAG funds.

## **PRO POLICIES AS SET FORTH THE JAG ADVISORY BOARD:**

1. Grants will be awarded with a 25% matching requirement. Match must be a cash match.
2. Prevention Resource Officer projects must reapply each year in the competitive application process.
3. Personnel

Personnel positions will only be reimbursed at annual entry level salary and benefits up to a maximum of \$28,000 per position. Grantees must certify what entry level is for their department.

Applicants requesting a full-time officer's position must be prepared to hire an additional officer to "backfill" the vacated position. Reimbursement for salary expenses will begin once the grant position is backfilled.

## **DJCS REPORTING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

All projects must:

- Submit monthly progress reports detailing progress and activities during the month.
- Submit monthly financial reports detailing expenditures during the month.
- Submit quarterly progress reports summarizing the overall achievements of the reporting period.
- Submit annual progress report summarizing the overall achievements of the project.
- Submit annually required baseline data for state evaluation of the program.

DJCS will conduct at least one on-site monitoring visit to examine overall activities and a report will be issued on the findings and/or recommendations. Projects will be monitored more often if problems develop.